

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1 (currently amended): A steel prepared by casting liquid steel deoxidized with Al, including one or more rare-earth metals (REMs) selected from the group of Ce, La, Pr and Nd, is characterized by,

the steel containing alumina clusters and consisting essentially of C of 0.0005 to 1.5 mass%, Si of 0.005 to 1.2 mass%, Mn of 0.05 to 3.0 mass%, P of 0.001 to 0.1 mass%, S of 0.0001 to 0.05 mass%, Al of 0.005 to 1.5 mass%, and T.O. of less than 80 ppm, with the remainder iron and unavoidable impurities,

containing where the alumina clusters in which are oxide-based inclusions consisting essentially of alumina and REM-oxide contain containing REM-oxide of not less than 0.5 mass% and not more than 15 mass%,

the mass ratio of total REM to total oxygen (T.O.), i.e. REM/T.O., is not less than 0.05 and not more than 0.5,

where total REM is not less than 0.1 ppm and less than 10 ppm and dissolved REM is less than 1 ppm.

Claims 2 to 4: (canceled).

5 (currently amended): The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim [[4]] 1, in which said steel further contains one or more of Cu of 0.1 to 1.5 mass%, Ni of 0.1 to 10.0 mass%, Cr of 0.1 to 10.0 mass% and Mo of 0.05 to 1.5 mass%.

6 (currently amended): The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim [[4]] 1, in which said steel further contains one or more of Nb of 0.005 to 0.1 mass%, V of 0.005 to 0.3 mass% and Ti of 0.001 to 0.25 mass%.

7 (currently amended): The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim [[4]] 1, in which said steel further contains B of 0.0005 to 0.005 mass%.

8 (currently amended): The steel containing alumina clusters described in ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, in which the maximum diameter of alumina clusters obtained by applying slime extraction to said steel is less than 100 μm .

9 (previously presented): The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim 8, in which the number of alumina clusters not smaller than 20 μm is not more than 2/kg.